

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Thursday, May 29, 2014

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Franklin County Commissioner Paula Brooks Urges Gov. Kasich's Veto of Renewable Energy Moratorium

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Franklin County Commissioner Paula Brooks, a member of the bipartisan White House Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience, today called upon Gov. John Kasich to veto Senate Bill 310, legislation that would impose a moratorium on the state's clean energy standards.

S.B. 310 was passed by the Ohio House on Wednesday, despite broad opposition, including several Republican legislators, and from the public and private sectors, environmental advocates, economic experts, small businesses, organized labor, and religious leaders. The bill imposes a two-year freeze on the state's successful renewable and advanced energy portfolio standards, and likely stymies Ohio's burgeoning advanced energy industry.

"I am deeply concerned with the Ohio General Assembly's decision to stand in the way of progress and jeopardize our state's, and perhaps our nation's, economic and environmental security, and energy independence," Commissioner Brooks said. "As a member of the bipartisan White House Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience, I am keenly aware of the crucial role energy policy has in the nation's economy, and the importance of supporting alternative energy to increase our Ohio communities' resilience in the face of climate impacts."

"And, as a ninth-generation Ohioan, who grew up on a small family farm, I learned the importance of environmental stewardship and preserving our state's rich natural resources for future generations. This bill flies in the face of all that."

Under the current alternative energy standards enacted in 2009, the Buckeye State has become one of the nation's most competitive in the rapidly growing alternative energy sector, employing more than 25,000 Ohioans and attracting more than \$1 billion in investment, according to a study conducted by The Ohio State University. Meanwhile filings with the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio reveal that the state's major utilities companies, including Franklin County-based American Electric Power, have saved consumers an additional billion dollars through energy efficiency programs.

"At best, S.B. 310 is short-sighted, hurting our families' pocketbooks and placing Ohio, and our future generations, at a competitive disadvantage with other states. Without the incentives, companies in the advanced energy and technology sectors are bound to look elsewhere to invest," Commissioner Paula Brooks said. "At worst, it will cost many Ohioans their jobs and put countless more lives at risk by contributing to unpredictable, life-threatening climate impacts."

Commissioner Brooks also noted S.B. 310 is unique in that it has galvanized broad-based opposition across the state.

"Sixty-seven percent of Ohioans believe utilities should be required to get more electricity from alternative and renewable energy sources," Commissioner Brooks said. "Since becoming commissioner, I have stood firmly for energy independence. This bill is bad for Ohio families and small business, and it could cripple Ohio's advanced energy industry. Ohioans have made it clear that they don't want to step back. I hope Gov. Kasich will act to protect his own children, and future generations, by vetoing S.B. 310."

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